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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 ADDIS ABABA 001349

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [KPKO](#) [SO](#) [ET](#)
SUBJECT: SOMALIA: ETHIOPIA POSITIVE ON JOINT U.S.-ETHIOPIA
APPROACH TO TFG

REF: A. NAIROBI 1867 (NOTAL)
[1](#)B. MAY 1 GAREY-YAMAMOTO EMAIL

Classified By: AMBASSADOR DONALD YAMAMOTO. REASON: 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (S/NF) SUMMARY. Ethiopia State Minister of Foreign Affairs Takeda noted to Ambassador May 2 that Ethiopia is positive on joint approaches with the U.S. to Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) on common messages to promote inter-clan dialogue. The approaches must be quiet, behind-the-scenes efforts. Takeda noted that the security situation is stable enough now to push the TFG on a transparent and open national reconciliation conference. But time is short, and if quick action is not taken now, an opportunity may be lost. International community support, especially funding, for the conference is critical. Takeda stated that the conference, and not Ethiopia or others, will need to work on selecting new government ministers and also a new Prime Minister for Somalia, if the clans support such a move. Takeda concluded that Ethiopia welcomes close discussion on any potential joint demarche on Somalia, but emphasized again that time is short. Finally, Takeda thanked the U.S. for its support for the TFG but expressed disappointment about one section of a proposed United Nations PRST that was critical of the indiscriminate shelling of populated areas in Mogadishu, which Ethiopia took as a criticism of Ethiopia. END SUMMARY.

JOINT APPROACH IS FINE: LET'S DISCUSS

[1](#)2. (S/NF) Ambassador met privately with State (deputy) Minister of Foreign Affairs Takeda Alemu May 2 to discuss ideas raised by Embassy Nairobi (ref A). Ambassador will meet Foreign Minister Seyoum on May 3 for further discussions on Somalia. Takeda and the Foreign Minister have been the point people on Somalia, pressuring TFG President Yusuf to reach out to other clans, and arranging Ethiopian meetings with various Somali clan elders. In response to Ambassador's suggestion on harmonizing common U.S.-Ethiopian messages and demarches to the TFG and to other Somali actors/clans, on the need for inter-clan dialogue and outreach on a wide range of ideas such as power-sharing, Takeda replied positively. He noted, however, that any approach should be quiet, and not an open and public display of pressure on President Yusuf and

the TFG. A behind-the-scenes approach will prove more effective, given Yusuf,s sensitivity and stubborn resistance to public pressure, Takeda said.

13. (S/NF) Takeda reiterated the high cost of military operations in Somalia, and the sacrifices made by Ethiopian troops to neutralize extremists and to support stability in Somalia through national reconciliation. While Ethiopia cannot stay indefinitely, it wants to see positive results and assurances that Somalia is headed in the right direction towards peace and stability. Towards this end, Takeda said Ethiopia looked forward to discussions with the U.S. on the type of common approach to the TFG and other clans. Takeda added that discussions should center on the message to be delivered, the benefit or "carrots" to the TFG for complying with requests, and on sequence of actions that need to be taken (national reconciliation conference, followed by cabinet reshuffle, then change in some TFG leadership positions). This would be an excellent follow-up to Foreign Minister Seyoum,s April visit to Washington and his discussions on Somalia with the Secretary and with Assistant Secretary Frazer, Takeda noted. Ambassador replied that he

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would discuss this with Ambassador Ranneberger in Nairobi and A/S Frazer,s staff in Washington. The Ambassador suggested that Ambassador Ranneberger or A/S Frazer,s deputy from Washington could come and visit Addis for discussions.

TIME IS SHORT; TIME FOR ACTION IS NOW

14. (S/NF) Takeda said that time was short and that action was necessary now. The security situation was stable at this

ADDIS ABAB 00001349 002 OF 003

moment, with the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) and TFG in control of Mogadishu and facing little resistance. But this could not last long, unless there was a political solution. The temporary security in Mogadishu provided the TFG with a great opportunity to push forward on a transparent and open National Reconciliation Conference. Only through a comprehensive Conference that attracted all clans and important clan elders, would there be a genuine inter-clan dialogue that could lead to sustainable peace and stability in Somalia. The Conference should be pushed forward to occur now and not be delayed. The TFG had to ensure that all clans would be represented, and that the "right" clan elders were present at the Conference. Absences by clans, or lack of senior representation, would doom the conference.

15. (S/NF) President Yusuf did not have much time and needed to act now to prepare for a successful conference. He needed to be active in not only a dialogue, but addressing the grievances of the clans. In addition, Takeda said the international community needed to provide full support and financial assistance to the Conference. Without international backing, the Conference could fail. Takeda also noted that despite differences with the European Union and the Arab League, their support for the TFG and the Conference was equally important and necessary to ensure stability in Somalia.

CHANGE IN PERSONALITIES: GET A NEW PRIME MINISTER?

16. (S/NF) Asked about changing personalities in the Somali government, Takeda was extremely cautious, stating that the Somali clans must determine the make-up of the government. The Conference would be the ideal venue for the clan elders to determine who the new government ministers should be. It would be up to the clans to determine if/when Prime Minister Ghedi was replaced, he said. But changes should take place at the time of the Conference by the clans, and not before,

in any unilateral decision by President Yusuf and the TFG government. Takeda echoed Prime Minister Meles, caution that there were many problems in Somalia and that one needed to avoid creating new ones. Replacing Ghedi, for instance, could lead to unintended consequences, such as alienating a clan or creating new fissures in clan relations. Let the Conference and the clan elders make the decisions, Takeda said.

17. (S/NF) Takeda noted that the Ethiopian Government is fed up with Ghedi, because of his recent cabinet reshuffle, which occurred without consulting the Ethiopian Government or other clans. The Ethiopians were particularly upset with the ouster of the Foreign Minister. But again, Takeda remarked that replacement of Ghedi lay in the hands of the other clan elders.

ETHIOPIA SENSITIVE TO PUBLIC STATEMENTS

18. (S/NF) Takeda said that approaches to the TFG should always be private and quiet, so as to avoid resistance by Yusuf. In this context, Takeda raised a proposed United Nations PRST criticizing the indiscriminate shelling of populated areas in Mogadishu. Takeda took this to mean a criticism of Ethiopian actions in Mogadishu to stabilize the situation. Prime Minister Meles noted the same theme to the Ambassador on April 30, noting that Ethiopia actions have helped to improve security in Mogadishu and stabilize the situation, which would help promote a national reconciliation conference.

19. (S/NF) COMMENT. Somali TFG Ambassador to Ethiopia and PermRep to the African Union Abdilkarin Farah asked Ambassador May 2 to press Yusuf on inter-clan dialogue. Farah is receiving word that Yusuf will replace Farah, a Hawiye clan member, with one of Yusuf,s friends in the Darood clan group. Such a change, especially the selection of yet another Darood in Yusuf,s government, will not sit

ADDIS ABAB 00001349 003 OF 003

well with the Ethiopians. Post will be in touch with Embassy Nairobi and the Africa Bureau on follow-up on how to commonly approach the TFG. Ethiopia appreciates U.S. support, and the visit last week to Washington by the Foreign Minister has strengthened Ethiopia's receptivity to U.S. views on Somalia and for any joint discussion in approaching the TFG and Somalia issues. END COMMENT.
YAMAMOTO